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**FTAA - COMMITTEE OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE PARTICIPATION
OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

COVER SHEET

Name (s)	Dion Casey
Address	215 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
	Washington, DC 20003
Organization (s) (if applicable)	Public Citizen
Country (ies) / Region (s)	United States

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ISSUES ADDRESSED (Check all that apply)

Agriculture	X	Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties	
Competition Policy		Civil Society	
Dispute Settlement	X	Electronic Commerce	
Government Procurement		Smaller Economies	
Intellectual Property Rights	X	The FTAA Process	
Investment	X	Other:	
Market Access			
Services			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – 2 pages maximum – (see Open Invitation):

Public Citizen submits these comments in response to a request from the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CGR) for public comment on trade matters related to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).ⁱ Public Citizen notes that the FTAA's San Jose Ministerial Declaration relies on World Trade Organization (WTO) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) rules for guidance in the FTAA negotiations. Given the negative outcomes of the WTO and NAFTA, the FTAA's reliance on this model is mistaken. Yet, instead of recognizing the failures of the WTO/NAFTA model, the FTAA negotiators are attempting to impose more of this anti-democratic, anti-consumer, anti-environment, pro-poverty agenda through the current U.S. approach to FTAA negotiations on nations in Latin America.

The WTO/NAFTA model of corporate-managed trade is under attack worldwide. A large part of this backlash is caused by the inappropriate expansion of these two pacts' terms into domestic regulatory issues. Unlike past international commercial agreements - such as the WTO's predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) - the WTO and NAFTA go beyond basic trade principles - such as treating domestic and foreign goods alike - and seek to impose subjective, value-laden decisions about the level of health or environmental protection a nation may pursue. The imposition (one-size-fits-all) of these subjective priorities and of limits on government food safety, public health, or other public interest regulations means the lives of nearly everyone living under an over-reaching agreement like the WTO or NAFTA is directly affected.

Our most basic advice for U.S. FTAA negotiators is to learn the WTO and NAFTA lessons and, in contrast to these agreements' invasive expanse, to stick to narrow trade principles, such as non-discrimination. The additional corporate de-regulatory agenda that has hitched a ride on the WTO and NAFTA must be dumped. Leave the special interests to try to undercut our basic public interest priorities in the sunlight of public policy-making in our Congress and regulatory agencies, not as free riders on U.S. trade negotiations.

The Interests of Public Citizen

Public Citizen, a non-profit consumer advocacy organization founded by Ralph Nader in 1971, has over 120,000 supporters nationwide. Public Citizen works in U.S. and international legislative bodies, courts, and regulatory agencies to strengthen the ability of citizens to participate in the domestic policy-making process and to ensure public health and safety. For the past nine years, Public Citizen has endeavored to educate both the American public and consumers worldwide about the enormous impact of international trade and economic globalization on nations' health, safety, labor, and environmental standards, democratic accountability, and policy-making procedures. Public Citizen submits these comments to urge the USTR and CGR to abandon the failed WTO/NAFTA model of international commercial agreements in favor of a new model that takes into account consumer and worker safety, environmental protection, and democratic accountability.

Executive Summary

These comments focus on the FTAA issue areas of investment, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, intellectual property rights, and dispute resolution. These comments express the views of Public Citizen, a well-respected U.S. consumer rights organization with years of experience in international commercial agreements and their effects on domestic sovereignty, consumer health and safety, worker rights, and the environment. These comments represent a member of civil society's input into the FTAA process, the purported intent of the CGR and its notice inviting comment.

ⁱ65 Fed. Reg. 38872 (Jun. 22, 2000).